

STAGE

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

Hugh, finding of a love affair with Lady Newhaven, falls in love with her. A wealthy and distinguished girl, Lady Newhaven challenges Hugh to draw lots with him. Using two dice-lighters, she draws the shorter number of the two to die by his own hand within five months. They draw. Lady Newhaven chooses the conversation, but does not know which man drew the shorter number. Lady Newhaven, who she afterwards calls, refuses to tell her. She believed her husband drew it. The fatal lot was in reality drawn by Hugh.

CHAPTER IV

HUGH had been asked by Doll Loftus, his hostess's husband, to walk over the Loftus estate Sunday afternoon.

As the two men wandered along Hugh's mind was busy. He had seen

"I used to see a good deal of them at one time," said Hugh, "but they seem to have forgotten me of late."

"Oh, that's her!" said Doll. "She is always off and on with people. Takes a fancy one day and a dislike the next. But he's not like that. You always know where to find him. Solid man, Newhaven. He doesn't say much, but what he says he sticks to."

"He gives one that impression," said

better get ashore and fetch the other boat. The water's enough to freeze one."

"I can't swim," said Hugh, his teeth chattering.

He was a delicate man at the best of times, and the cold was laying hold of him.

Doll looked at his blue lips and shaking hands, and his face became grave. He measured the distance to the shore with his eye. It had receded in a treacherous manner.

"I'm not much of a performer myself," he said, "since I broke my arm last winter, but I can get to the shore. The question is, can you hold on while I go back and bring the other boat, or shall we have a try at getting back together?"

"I'm hold on all right," said Hugh, instantly aware that Doll did not think he could tow him to land, but was politely ready to risk his existence in

the attempt.

"Back directly," said Doll, and without a second's delay he was gone.

Hugh put out his whole strength in the endeavor to raise himself somewhat out of the ice-cold water.

But the upturned boat sidled away from him like a skittish horse, and after grappling with it he only slipped back again exhausted, and had to clutch it as best he could.

Suddenly a remembrance flashed across him of the sinister face of the water as it had first looked up at him through the trees.

Now he understood.

This was the appointed place for him to die.

Hugh tightened his hold with his right hand, for his left was paralyzed.

"It will not," he said, "Nothing shall induce me. I will live and marry Rachel!"

The cold advanced suddenly on him, as at the point of the bayonet.

"Why not die?" said another voice.

"Will it be easier in three months' time than it is now? Will it ever be so again? See how near death is to life, a wheel within a wheel, two rings linked together. A touch, and you pass from one to the other."

Hugh looked wildly round him. The sun lay warm upon the tree-tops. It could not be that he was going to die here and now; here in the living sunshine, with the quiet, friendly faces of the hills all around him.

He strengthened his numbhold fiercely, all but lost it, regained it.

Cram, long held at bay, overcame him.

And the boat kept turning in the twilight.

He reached the end of his strength, and held on beyond it.

He heard some one near at hand suffocating in longdrawn gasp. Himself.

The boat was always turning in the darkness.

The struggle was over.

"It is better so," said the other voice, through the roaring of a cataract near at hand. "Four mother will hear it better so. And all the long difficulties are over, and pain is past, and life is past, and sleep is best."

"But Rachel!"

She was with him.

Death was only her arms round him in a great peace.

Death was better than life.

He let go the silly boat that kept him from her and turned wholly to her, his closed eyes against her breast.

(To Be Continued.)

DEATH WAS ONLY HER ARMS AROUND HIM IN A GREAT PEACE.

Hugh

"I rather think he is there now," said Doll, pointing to the further shore. "I see a figure moving and a little specks. I should not wonder if it were him and the boys. They often come here on Sunday afternoons."

"You have long sight," said Hugh.

He had met Lord Newhaven several times since the drawing of lots, and they had always greeted each other with cold civility.

But Hugh avoided him when he could without drawing attention to the fact that he did so.

Scarlett and Doll boarded a boat and pushed out into midstream. Floating tackle lay at their feet, and Loftus, unable to resist the temptation, baited and stung out a line.

Instantly a huge pike seized the hook and a tunnel for life or death began.

"He's coming up again," said Doll, naturally, sliding forward his left hand, to meet him by the eyes, and then

I doubt if I can lift him. He's a big brute. He's dragging the whole boat and everything. He's about done now. Steady! Now!"

The great side of the pike lay heaving on the surface for a second, and Doll's left forefinger and thumb were groping for its eyes.

But the agonized pike made a last effort. Doll had him with his left hand, but could not raise him.

"Pull him in now for all you're worth," he roared to Hugh, as he made a grab with his right hand.

His legs began to lose their grip under the violent contortions of the pike.

The boat tilted madly.

Hugh reached forward to help him. There was a frantic effort, and it

captured.

"Bad luck," said Doll, coming up spluttering, shaking his head like a quail. "But we shall get him yet. He's bleeding like a pig. He'll come up directly. Good Lord! the water's like ice. We must be over one of the springs. I suppose you are all right, Scarlett!"

Hugh had come up, but in very different fashion.

"Yes," he said faintly, clutching the upturned boat.

"I'm not sure," said Doll, keeping going with one hand, "that we had not



Rachel in church that morning and again hope warmed with despair.

Love and marriage were not for him. That far-away God, that Judge in the black cap, had pronounced sentence against him, had doomed that he should die in his sins.

When he had sat in his own village church only last Sunday between his mother and sister, he had seen the empty place on the chancel wall where the tablet to his memory would be put.

When he walked through the church yard, his mother leaning on his arm, he had seen the vacant space by his father's grave already filled by the mound of raw earth which would shortly cover him.

There must come some day out!

He had stumbled gaily through one day after another of these weeks in which he had not seen Rachel toward his next meeting with her, as a half-blind man stumbles toward the light.

But the presence of Rachel afforded no clue to the labyrinth.

What vain hope was this that he had cherished unconsciously that she could help him?

There was no help for him. There was no way out. He was in a trap.

He must die, and soon, by his own hand.

Incredible, preposterous fate!

His thoughts, reverent, full of timid longing, fell on Rachel, and his heart cried aloud, suddenly:

"If she loves me I shall not be able to leave her!"

As his mind thus ran on, Hugh and Loftus reached the edge of a little lake which separated the Loftus estate from that of Lord Newhaven.

A sense of unreality and foreboding seized on Hugh as the still face of the water looked up at him.

Where had he been before, this sea of glass reflecting the yellow woods that sloped to its very edge?

What had it to do with him?

"I have been here before," he said, involuntarily.

"I dare say," said Doll. "Newhaven marches with me here. The boundary is by that clump of silver birch. The Drones come in there, but you can't see it. The Newhavens are friends of yours, aren't they?"

"Acquaintances," said Hugh, absently, looking hard at the water.

He had never been here before. Memory groped blindly for a lost link, as one who momentarily recognizes a face in a crowd and tries to put a name to it and fails.

As the face disappeared, so the sudden impression passed from Hugh's mind.

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THE CASE OF MRS. HIEPE.

If you were to call upon Mrs. Julius Hiepe at her home, 783 Centre ave., East New York, Brooklyn, she will tell you a very striking and graphic story of ten years' sickness and suffering without relief, and how she was cured after she had abandoned all hope.

Mrs. Hiepe's experience is a very common one in this climate, since it forms a complete history of a disease that started with a neglected cold and ended with what her family physician erroneously pronounced Consumption.

Her trouble began in her nose. It itched and burned. It was always stopped up. She had a sharp pain across the eyes. She had to sleep with her mouth open. Consequently her throat was dry and parched in the morning. She endured all this for a time and then went to a doctor. He couldn't help her, so she advised her to go to a hospital on

VINCENT STREET,

Brooklyn, where she says they operated on her and secured something into her nose and throat. This did no good, but caused great pain and drove the disease deeper down into the chest.

So for a time she lost faith in doctors and instead tried all the patent medicines she heard of. Nothing gave her any relief. Her condition became pitiable. She had a cough that seemed to tear her lungs. Every long breath caused intense pains under the shoulder blades and behind the breast bone. While the trouble had been driven down into her chest, the disease was still at work in her nose and throat. Her breath became so offensive that she was ashamed to come into contact with any one. She became unable to attend to her household duties.

Then she resumed medical treatment with her family doctor. She was with him for three years and spent a large sum of money and took great quantities of medicine. At the end of three years her condition was such that her doctor said to her: "You have Consumption, and I can't do anything more for you."

By this time the disease had crept down to the stomach, because at night she swallowed the accumulation of mucus in her throat. She couldn't eat any breakfast, and she ate only solid food she suffered great distress. When her stomach was empty it seemed as if the walls were shrunk to her.

A year ago she came to Doctor Copeland's office. At this time her condition was very serious. She took two months' treatment and noticed no improvement. She was kept on growing worse, and concluded to try it again.

Two months more passed without change, but in the third month she noticed that her cough had grown less and that her appetite was coming back. This encouraged her, and she kept on faithfully.

To-day she says she is cured. She has no more headaches. Her sleep comes at night. Her cough has entirely disappeared. She breathes freely through her nostrils. She can eat anything without distress. She is free from pain, to rapidly taking on flesh and strength, and no longer is tormented with the fear that she has Consumption.

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